

# **Platte County Juvenile Services Comprehensive Plan January 1, 2009-December 31, 2011**

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## Community Team:

A group of Platte County community leaders held four meetings to finalize the 2009-2011 Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan. The Crime Commission's community planning tool was used as a format to help identify priorities and problems of each system point. A multi-disciplinary group was in attendance including law enforcement (city and county), educators, administrators, probation staff, health and human services staff, Boys and Girls Home staff, mentoring program directors, Youth for Christ staff, the County Attorney and Deputy County Attorney, East Central District Health Department, Platte Valley Diversion Program Board members, school counselors, school parent liaisons, the school interventionist and the Platte Valley Diversion Program administrator and Bilingual Diversion Officer. As a result of those meetings, the following recommendations are submitted for review to help establish the planning priorities for the next three-year Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan.

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# Community Planning Decision Point Analysis

Data Points	Total Population (*2000)	Juvenile Population (**2006)
Total Population	31,662	3,918
Male	15,700	1,983
Female	15,962	1,935
White	29,854	3,818
Hispanic	2,072	483
Black	111	37
American Indian	90	30
Asian	127	33
Native Hawaiian	10	NA
Other	NA	NA
Juveniles Arrested		448
Juveniles Detained		20
Juveniles Prosecuted		411
Juveniles Placed on Diversion		163
Number of Juveniles Adjudicated		248
Number of Juveniles Placed on Probation		105
YRTC-Kearney		11
YRTC-Geneva		10

Source of data: \*2000 US Census Data

\*\*2006 NCJJ/OJJDP Easy Access Website (Ages 10-17)

## System Decision Point: Arrest Citation: Police/Law Enforcement

**Decision:** *Whether an information report should be filed, or what offense, if any, with which juvenile should be cited or arrested.*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Sufficient probable cause to believe That an offense has been committed and that the accused is the one who committed the offense.
- Evidence supports statutory Elements required to prove offense

### Informal Determining Factors

- Age
- Nature of offense
- Probability of continuation or escalation of criminal activity.
- Flight risk
- Dynamics of family
- Law enforcement contact is documented in a data base
- There is one school resource officer for the public schools and one for Parochial schools

**Decision:** *Whether to cite or arrest juvenile or adult*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Seriousness of offense
- Age

### Informal Determining Factors

- If the juvenile is in the care and custody of HHS, law enforcement may contact the worker on call to discuss options

- Law enforcement protocol mandates all. Juvenile offenders are cited or detained as a juvenile. The County Attorney makes the determination whether to proceed in Juvenile Court or file a criminal complaint.

**Decision:** *Whether to take juvenile into custody or cite and release*  
(NRS § 43-248(1), (2); §43-250(1), (2), (3))

#### **Formal Determining Factors**

- As stated in statute

#### **Informal Determining Factors**

- Immediate risk to juvenile
- Immediate/short term risk to public
- Seriousness of offense
- Extent to which parent, guardian or other responsible adult is available to take responsibility for juvenile
- In the majority of instances, the juvenile is cited and released to parent or responsible adult
- If the juvenile is detained due to a mental health crises, the on-call HHS worker is notified. Deference is given

to placement with the parents who voluntary see the appropriate mental health care necessary to avoid the immediate harm.

#### **Comments:**

According to statistics from the Crime Commission, a total of 418 juvenile cases were filed in the Platte County Juvenile Court in 2005. That number includes law violations, abuse/neglect petitions and termination of parental rights cases. The Platte County Court reports 448 total juvenile filings for 2006. The Columbus Police Department has a database that allows tracking of any contact of a juvenile by an Officer. The Platte County Sheriff's Department and the Nebraska State Patrol track by citation or written warning only. The absence of accurate data or data limited to citations and warnings may not accurately reflect the scope of law enforcement contact with juveniles. There seems to be an increase of law enforcement contact with Hispanic juveniles 10-17 years of age. An increase in citations through the school resource officer for 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Assaults and Truancy continues to be on the rise. School district staff works closely with law enforcement and the county attorney to discuss alternatives. Steps are being developed to assure that consistency for all students is being enforced according to school policy and codes.

## System Decision Point: Initial Detention: State of Nebraska Probation

**Decision:** *Whether a juvenile should be detained or released*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Outcome risk assessment
- Accessibility of placement options: parent's/guardians, emergency shelter, staff secure facility, secure detention facility

### Informal Determining Factors

- Law enforcement consider every option before contacting probation to utilize the Juvenile Detention Screening Instrument (NRS 43-260.01)
- Secure detention is a last resort for law enforcement and probation
- Platte County contracts with Northeast Nebraska Juvenile Services located in Madison, NE for secure and staff secure placement of juveniles who meet the criteria necessary for detainment.
- Probation may be notified in the event of a law violation that may be associated with a mental health crises. In such cases the behavioral health issue takes precedence. Juveniles who may present a danger to self or others and who may have a DSM IV diagnoses are not sent to Madison.

### Comments:

According to District Three Probation statistics, forty five (45) Platte County juveniles were detained in Madison by probation during the past three years. The Platte County Sheriff's Department reports the total number of Platte County juveniles detained for the past three years as follows:

*2005 Secure Males-27	Females-13	Staff Secure-15 (Probation Ordered: 20)
*2006 Secure Males-26	Females-9	Staff Secure-20 (Probation Ordered: 10)
*2007 Secure Males-36	Female-4	Staff Secure-36 (Probation Ordered: 15)

\*These numbers reflect the combined total of juvenile detentions ordered by Probation, the Court and OJS.

## System Decision Point: Charge Juvenile: County Attorney

**Decision:** *Whether to prosecute juveniles*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Whether admissible evidence supports the elements of the offense to be prosecuted
- Factors under NRS §43-276

### Informal Determining Factors

- Diversion is an alternative offered to first-time non-violent misdemeanor offenders 18 or younger
- Spanish speaking diversion officer assists Hispanic juvenile offenders and their families
- One County Judge dedicates his docket Strictly to a juvenile case-load
- Probable Cause hearings to determine continued detention are held as soon as

possible before either the County Judge or Juvenile Judge.

- Certified Court interpreter available for Juvenile Court proceedings

**Decision:** *Whether youth should be prosecuted as juvenile or adult*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- Gravity and nature of offense
- Services available to juvenile for rehabilitation
- Prior history in Juvenile Court
- Factors under NRS § 43-276
- Age

**Informal Determining Factors**

- Degree of accountability
- Best interest of juvenile

**Decision:** *Offense for which juvenile should be charged*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- As outlined in statute
- Charge must be supported by sufficient evidence to establish proof beyond a reasonable doubt

**Informal Determining Factors**

- Prosecutorial discretion
- Nature of offense
- Eligibility for Diversion

**Comments:**

The YLS assessment tool has been adopted in assisting in determining if the juvenile's needs are beyond the scope of the resources available through the diversion program. Care must be taken to ensure that the juvenile, who is otherwise eligible for Diversion but whose needs may be beyond the normal scope of diversion, is not deprived of the opportunity for an alternative to the criminal justice system.

**System Decision Point: Pre-adjudication detention: Juvenile Court Judge**

**Decision:** *Whether juvenile detained at the time of citation/arrest should continue in detention or out-of-home placement pending adjudication*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- Whether there is an "immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of such juvenile"
- Whether there is an "immediate and urgent necessity" for the protection of persons or property
- Whether the juvenile is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court
- Nature of the offense
- NRS 43-253 et seq provides that a hearing for continued detention in a pre-adjudication setting must be held within 48 hours of the detention.

**Informal Determining Factors**

- The majority of juvenile offenders who are detained are released to parent/guardian after the detention hearing. The Judge makes a finding that it is in the best interest of the juvenile. The Judge also establishes that the parent/guardian are willing to take responsibility for the juvenile and that the in-home placement is in a secure setting
- Electronic monitoring is an option for pre-adjudication detention
- Strict criteria must be found to keep a juvenile in detention.



- Detention is an alternative of last resort

**Comments:**

Both the Juvenile Judge and the County Judge who may preside at detention hearings believe the law does not allow juveniles to be in detention longer than necessary. This same standard is also applied to any other out of home placement. As a result, most juveniles who have met the criteria for detention are returned to the care and custody of their parent/guardian. Electronic monitoring is an option available in this jurisdiction. Electronic monitoring allows a higher degree of supervision for an in-home placement. The County Court funds pre-adjudication and pre-disposition electronic monitoring. A grant associated with Platte County's Comprehensive Juvenile Plan funds electronic monitoring for juveniles on probation.

**System Decision Point: Probable Cause Hearing: Juvenile Court Judge**

**Decision:** *Whether State can show that probable cause exists that juvenile is within the jurisdiction of the court*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- NRS 43-253 et seq

**Informal Determining Factors**

- No factors reported.

**Comments:**

The State must meet a Probable Cause Standard to show that the court has jurisdiction in a Detention hearing. The State must show by a preponderance of the evidence that the Court has jurisdiction in a 43-247(3)(a) adjudication. The State must show by clear and convincing evidence that the Court has jurisdiction in ICWA 43-247(3)(a) and non-ICWA 43-292 termination of parental rights and 43-247(3)(c) mental health adjudications. The State must show beyond a reasonable doubt that the Court has jurisdiction in 43-247(1), 43-247(2), 43-247(3)(b) and in ICWA 43-292 termination of parental right adjudications.

**System Decision Point: Competency Evaluation: Juvenile Court Judge**

**Decision:** *Whether juvenile is competent to participate in the proceedings*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- As found in NRS 43-247(3)(c) and NRS 71-908, The Mental Health Commitment Act
- Hearing must be held within seven (7) days

**Informal Determining Factors**

- State must prove the Courts jurisdiction by clear and convincing evidence.
- State must show that the juvenile presents danger to self or others and that there is a DMS IV diagnoses that may be shown by a reasonable degree of medical certainty. State must show that the recommended disposition is the least restrictive treatment alternative.
- State usually files a 43-247(3)(a) with The (3)(c) to provide the Court with dual jurisdiction

**Decision:** *Whether juvenile is “responsible” for his/her acts*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- “Complete evaluation of the juvenile including any authorized are of inquiry requested by the court”
- Expert opinion of psychiatrist, or Ph.D. psychologist

**Informal Determining Factors**

- No factors reported

**Comments:**

NRS 71-908 requires the preparation of a mental health treatment plan. However HHSS has promulgated no rules to direct their caseworkers to provide such a plan to the Court. The dual adjudication provides a means for the information to be disseminated through a case plan and court report.

**System Decision Point: Adjudication: Juvenile Court Judge**

**Decision:** *Whether the juvenile is, beyond a reasonable doubt, “a person described by §43-247”*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- The Court’s determination rests on whether the State proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the Court has jurisdiction over this juvenile whether it is by adjudication of the allegations contained in the petition or by admission of the juvenile, by providing sufficient factual basis to support the allegations. The burden of proof beyond a reasonable doubt applies to 43-247(1), (2) and (3)(b)
- Residency
- Age
- NRS 43-279

**Informal Determining Factors**

- No factors reported. In order to protect the rights of the juvenile, informal considerations are not utilized

**Decision:** *Whether to order probation to conduct a pre-disposition investigation (statutory authority unclear-see also: §29-2261(2))*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- NRS 43-286
- NRS 43-413
- 

**Informal Determining Factors**

- Judge may order “direct” probation without preparation of PDI
- Judge may order PDI when additional Information is needed for disposition
- If the case results from an unsatisfactory termination from diversion, and if the circumstances of termination warrant, the Diversion

Administrator may ask the Court to Consider ordering a PDI or OJS evaluation.

**Decision:** *Whether to order OJS evaluation*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- NRS § 29-22049(3): “Prior to Making a disposition which commits the juvenile to the Office of Juvenile Services, the court shall order the Juvenile to be evaluated by the office If the juvenile has not had an evaluation within the past twelve months.
- NRS 43-413

**Informal Determining Factors**

- The Court usually orders an OJS evaluation subsequent to a PDI

**Decision:** *Whether to order a PDI and an OJS Evaluation*

**Formal Determining Factors**

- NRS 43-413

**Informal Determining Factors**

- The Court initially orders a PDI
- An OJS evaluation is ordered in the event the Court requires additional information for disposition

**Problem:**

There may be a lag time between the unsuccessful termination of diversion and the juveniles Court appearance. The Court date is docketed approximately three (3) months in advance to allow completion of diversion. All cases referred for Diversion are filed in the Juvenile Court and dismissed upon successful completion of Diversion and payment of Courts costs by the juvenile.

**Solution:**

Under certain circumstances the County Attorney may file a Praecipe for Summons which would compel the juvenile’s appearance within thirty (30) days of service. Service is in the manner provided by law. As juvenile justice professionals realize, swift justice is effective justice. The deterrent effect lessens as the time lapse between the commission of the offense and the consequences administered, lengthens.

**Comments:**

According to statistics from the Crime Commission, Platte County had 248 juvenile adjudications in 2007. Note: These statistics are adjudications, and do not include pending adjudications or adjudications which may have been filed in the previous year but adjudicated in the current year.

## System Decision Point: Disposition: Juvenile Court Judge

**Decision:** *Whether to place juvenile on probation*

### Formal Determining Factors

- As outlined in statute

### Informal Determining Factors

- The Court, at disposition, may order  
A term of probation with a set  
expiration date. The order of probation  
Is frequently ordered without  
preparation of a PDI

**Decision:** *Whether to commit juvenile to the Office of Juvenile Services*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Whether juvenile is at least twelve  
years of age

### Informal Determining Factors

- The Court will not place with OJS unless  
(1) out of home placement is warranted  
(2) resources are an issue or, (3) if  
juvenile is under care and custody of  
HHSS in an in-home placement setting
- YRTC placements are infrequent and  
considered an alternative of last resort  
by this court

**Decision:** *Whether to place juvenile on probation and commit juvenile  
To HHS or OJS*

### Formal Determining Factors

- As outlined in statute

### Informal Determining Factors

- The Court supports a continuum of care

### Comments:

According to probation statistics the following numbers of juveniles were placed on probation:

July 2005-June 2006 139 juveniles

July 2006-June 2007 167 juveniles

July 2007-June 2008 129 juveniles

The Court uses a continuum of care approach. The least restrictive alternative is given the greatest weight. School Administrators report that they have an excellent working relationship with Diversion, Probation, HHSS, and OJS.

## System Decision Point: Administrative Sanctions: Probation

**Decision:** *Whether to impose administrative sanctions on a juvenile.*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Probation officer has reasonable cause to  
Believe that probationer has committed a

### Informal Determining Factors

- Probation uses administrative sanctions  
for non-criminal violations

- Non-criminal or substance abuse violation
- Substance abuse violation refers to a positive test for drug or alcohol use, failure to report for such a test or failure to comply with substance abuse evaluations or treatment
- New law violations result in a notification and request to the County Attorney for the filing of a Motion to Revoke Probation
- Administrative sanctions are not applied when a probationer absconds from supervision, presents and imminent harm to self or others or exhibits a deliberate pattern of multiple non-compliance

**Comments:**

No comments for this section

## **System Decision Point: Motion to Revoke Probation: County Attorney**

**Decision:** *Whether to file a motion to revoke probation.*

### **Formal Determining Factors**

- As outlined in statute

### **Informal Determining Factors**

- If a Motion to Revoke is based on a new law violation which has yet to be adjudicated, the matter is often continued to allow that adjudication. In that event the disposition of both matters is often handled at the same time.
- If a PDI was not ordered at time of the original disposition it may well be ordered at time of re-disposition.

**Comments:**

No comments for this section

## **System Decision Point: Modification/Revocation of Probation: Juvenile Court Judge**

**Decision:** *Whether to modify or revoke probation*

### **Formal Determining Factors**

- As outlined in statute

### **Informal Determining Factors**

- The Court usually modifies probation with additional terms and conditions rather than revoke or unsatisfactorily discharge the Order of Probation
- The Juvenile is usually sent to YRTC or OJS in the event the Court revokes the Probation

**Comments:**

Even though the Court uses a continuum of care approach, Intensive Supervision Probation (ISP) has a low juvenile caseload in Platte County.

## System Decision Point: Setting Aside Adjudication: Juvenile Court Judge

**Decision:** *Whether juvenile has satisfactorily completed his or her probation and supervision or the treatment program of his or her commitment*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Juvenile's post-adjudication behavior and response to treatment and rehabilitation programs
- Whether setting aside adjudication will depreciate seriousness of juvenile's conduct or promote disrespect for the law
- Whether failure to set aside adjudication or seal the records of the proceeding, may result in disabilities disproportionate to the conduct upon which the adjudication was based.

### Informal Determining Factors

- Judge sets termination date and unless there is a modification or MTR filed, termination date will be considered a satisfactory completion of probation
- Unsatisfactory discharge is accomplished in a formal hearing or informally by written acknowledgement of the juvenile and after a finding by the Court that the resources available to the juvenile have been exhausted.

**Decision:** *Whether juvenile should be discharged from custody and supervision of OJS*

### Formal Determining Factors

- Many of the same considerations as those for Probation. Decision is up to OJS/HHSS

### Informal Determining Factors

- OJS/HHSS informs Court of release from YRTC. Juvenile may be administratively released or released on parole into care and custody of OJS/HHSS
- There is no further Court involvement. The Court loses jurisdiction over the juvenile once the juvenile is committed to YRTC.

**Comments:** No comments for this section

#### **IV: Community Socio-Economics:**

B. Platte County is located in central rural Nebraska. Nebraska Highway 30 and Nebraska Highway 81 are the two main thoroughfares providing easy access to the community. The Union Pacific Railroad is one of the main reasons that Platte County remains so successful providing a strong industrial base for employment opportunities. Platte County borders Colfax County where a major industry employs the majority of the Hispanic population which resides in Platte County. According to the 2000 Census, 7.7% of all residents and 9.0% of children live in poverty. The 2004 rate for the entire population was 8.6%. The number of Hispanic residents increased from 2,071 in 2000 to an estimated 3,173 in 2007, a 53% increase. The main industries include farming and manufacturing. According to the Nebraska Department of Revenue, Platte County's per capita personal income for 2005 was \$28,455. This compares to \$32,923 for the state of Nebraska.

Other communities in Platte County include: Humphrey, Monroe, Duncan, Platte Center, Creston, Lindsay, Cornlea and Tarnov.

Although the Columbus area is fortunate to be economically stable, our situation does offer challenges such as finding enough skilled workers. Many immigrants do not have a high school education. Even though Platte County has a low unemployment rate, the wages for some jobs is not enough for families to adequately support themselves.

Central Community College is located in Platte County and provides the necessary training to support the county's industrial base. 95% of those graduates remained in the state. However, because of the lack of English speaking workers, seeking further education to become more skilled is lacking.

During the 2006-07 school year, the largest school attendance center, Columbus Public school district reported that 38.70% of school age children qualified for Free/Reduced priced meals. Lakeview Community Schools, the second largest attendance center has one of its three elementary feeder schools that have 90% Hispanic students. This results in unique challenges within these two school districts that have such diverse populations.

The multiple industrial shifts create challenges for adequate supervision of school age children during the after school hours. There are currently 356 students enrolled in the Communities Together Can! After School Program's elementary sites while 100 students participate in after school programming at the Columbus Middle School. The local YMCA provides after school programming as well to assist with the supervision of youth. The Team Mates and Big Pal/Little Pal mentoring programs provide valuable resources for those students identified by schools in need of adult mentors. Bilingual services are lacking throughout the community and at times older children are removed from their daily schools to translate for the families. This results in a high rate of absenteeism among this population.

## V. Identified Priority Areas:

1) As cited in the previous Comprehensive Plans, the Platte County Juvenile Diversion Program/Juvenile Services is a valuable resource that continues to provide direction and accountability for first time juvenile offenders while also contributing support in the areas of parenting, substance abuse awareness, decision making education and free drug testing. The program continues to assist youth financially with scholarship opportunities for diversion participation and financial assistance for mandated drug evaluations that have been identified through the YLS/CMI or are court ordered. Diversion works closely with diverted truancy cases establishing specific guidelines and expectations from those families. The program also works in conjunction with the school systems to assure academic improvement and a decrease in absences.

### Platte Valley Diversion Program Re-Offense Data

	July 2005 – June 2006		July 2006- June 2007		July 2007 – June 2008*		Data Total*	
<b>Total # of Diversion Eligible Youth Referred</b>	213		202		186		601	
<b>Total # of Hispanic Diversion Eligible Youth Referred</b>	41	19%	39	19%	41	22%	121	20%
<b>Total # of all Diversion Intakes</b>	168		161		146		475	
<b>Total # of Hispanic Intakes</b>	29	17%	34	21%	34	23%	97	20%
<b>Total # of Re-offenders</b>	60		24		56		140	
<b>% Total</b>	36%		15%		38%		29%	
<b>Total # of Hispanic Re-offenders</b>	9	15%	8	33%	12	21%	29	30%
<b># of Terminations</b>	6		10		12		28	
<b># of Hispanic Terminations</b>	0		3		6		9	

Diversion youth are tracked through 18 years of age for re-offences. If they are prosecuted in juvenile court they are counted as a re-offender in the above report. During the past three reporting periods, 70% of all diversion youth have not appeared in the juvenile court system.

2) Platte County continues to see growth in its diverse population. The number of minority contacts with the Juvenile Justice system continues to increase. Platte County needs to ensure that all juveniles are treated equally in the Juvenile Justice system. Platte County continues to address this challenge by providing Certified Court Interpreters to assist in Juvenile Court proceedings. The Diversion Program employs a bilingual Hispanic diversion officer and a bilingual parent educator. Most local businesses employ an interpreter or bilingual staff to assist with the communication challenge. Law enforcement has on-call interpreters and bilingual publications. Both school districts employ Certified English as Second Language instructors and the local GED Program is offered in Spanish. Columbus High School has developed a Hispanic Advisory Council that meets monthly and both school districts employ



full time Spanish parent liaisons. The Hispanic faith based population continues to be involved in a limited capacity within the community.

3) Disproportionate Minority Contact is an issue that is being addressed at the national level by the Federal Government. Platte County has been identified as one of nine counties state wide that qualifies to receive DMC assistance. Platte County reports the number of Hispanic residents increased from 2,071 in 2000 to an estimated 3,173 in 2007, an increase of 53%. It would benefit this community to continue to work with the State's DMC coordinator to assist with any training and educational services.

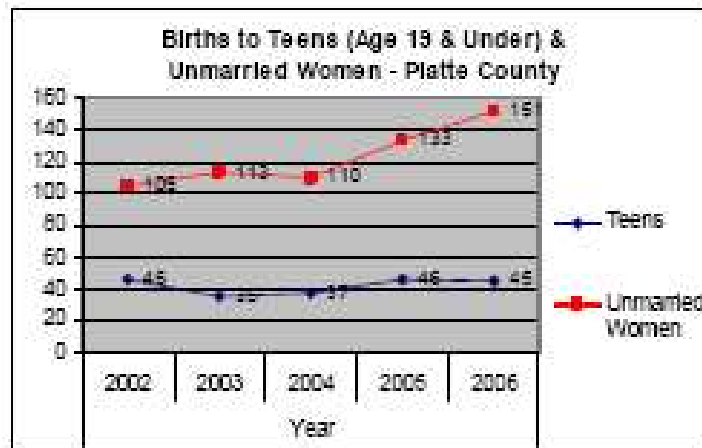
4) The 2007 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Survey indicate that Platte County continues to have substance abuse issues among youth 17 years of age and younger. The survey indicated since 2003, that there was a 66% increase - 13.0% (2003) compared to a 38.6% (2007) of 6<sup>th</sup> Graders who had consumed alcohol more than one time. When asked the question regarding having more than a sip of alcohol in the last 30 days, 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported an increase of 50% - 22.4% (2003) vs. 44.1% in 2007. The East Central District Health Department has received funding to develop a coalition to address these concerns. With the results of this survey and additional research, Platte County will need to develop a more aggressive stance against substance abuse issues in the community. Treatment resources are lacking in Platte County and youth at risk must sometimes travel 40-50 miles in order to receive adequate IOP services and substance evaluations. There are no bilingual drug and alcohol counselors located in Platte County. Local providers do not provide adolescent group therapy at this time.

5) Truancy remains an accurate predictor of future delinquency. Along with truancy come the issue of school connectivity and the question of graduation. Since 2004-05 Platte County's two main high school attendance centers have worked diligently to stay below the 2006-07 state average drop-out rate of 1.94% in. However, data collected by the Columbus Police Department reports that truancy warnings/citations have increased 44% since July 2005-June 2006. 143 compared to 254 truancy warnings/citations issued in June 2007-July 2008. Not all cases are prosecuted, some are dismissed or declined if the juvenile is placed in the YRTC and some cases are combined with prior offenses. Platte County prosecuted 36 juveniles in 2006-2007 for truancy. The diversion program accepted 6 juveniles into the program for truancy during the same year. Schools and law enforcement are beginning to address the increase by developing procedures and protocol when students are regularly absent from school. The use of the YLS/CMI provides probation and diversion professionals with the ability to evaluate and address underlying issues. Platte County will need to continue to discuss and develop additional strategies in order to prevent an increase in drop-out rate and in order to prevent the potential of future juvenile crime.

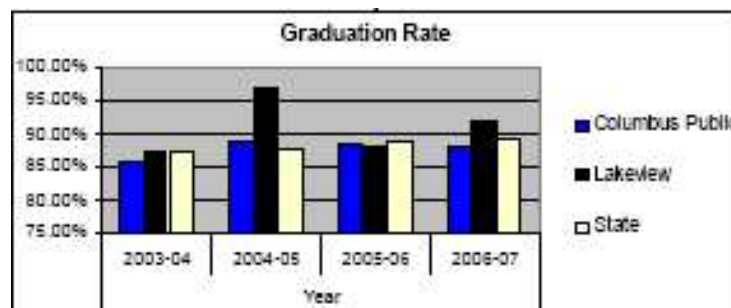
6) Identified "Gang Activity" has surfaced within the Platte County area. The need to continue to gather information and assess the seriousness of the concern moves forward. Several trainings have been offered for law enforcement, educators, health providers, community agencies, parents, community leaders and other interested citizens. The community has seen an increase in tagging/graffiti, assaults, teen pregnancies and one juvenile offender is currently being prosecuted for an alleged drive by shooting. At this time, it appears that most of the gang activity is occurring among the minority population. Platte County will need to become more efficient in addressing these concerns beginning with more education and an increased awareness for all parents.

7) A lack of parental responsibility and involvement continues to be identified and most recently is the number one issue that was identified in the 2008 Connect Columbus Task Force assessment. The assessment was completed by a cross section of the population. The results will provide the Area United Way a direction and focus regarding disbursement of funds. Funds are raised annually to assist 19 non-profit agencies in providing resources to address the needs in Platte County. The United Way wants to assure that those funds are being distributed to those agencies that share the vision of providing programming that assures a safe and healthy community.

8) The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services reports that Platte County teenage pregnancies are back to the 2002 high of 46 after a drop in 2003 (35) and 2004 (36). Youth for Christ, the lead agency in dealing with teenage pregnancies offers a Teen Moms & Dads program. YFC continues to see an increase in program numbers addressing teenage pregnancy. However, graduation rates in Platte County continue to remain high, which could be attributed to pregnant teenage females continuing to choose to remain in school. It should also be noted that in 2007, The East Central District Health Department reported that there were 67 sexually transmitted infection cases in Platte County. Of those cases, 15 (22%) occurred in youth aged 15-19.



Source: Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

## VI: Strategies

### STRATEGY TIMELINE

<b>Time Schedule</b>	<b>Priority #1: <i>The number of youth entering the juvenile justice system</i> Identified Strategies</b>
On-going	Platte County will continue to offer the diversion opportunity to first time juvenile offenders that are identified through the Platte County Attorney's Office
Meet with County Board of Supervisors after completion of financial analysis-April 2009.	The county will need to determine the value of the juvenile diversion program and begin discussing funding responsibilities. Diversion will continue to address holding youth accountable for first offenses without the expense of the juvenile entering the court system. The program will assist in decreasing the recidivism rate and promote prevention strategies.
Annually through grants that are available	The Platte Valley Diversion Program will continue to seek grant funding to provide assistance for resources when services have been identified through the YLS/CMI or drug evaluations.
On-going	Lack of sufficient services in the area require families to sacrifice valuable time and resources. The diversion program administrator continues to contribute leadership and direction while serving on numerous coalitions and councils addressing these concerns.

<b>Time Schedule</b>	<b>Priority #2 and Priority #3: <i>Diversion Program Bilingual Services</i> <i>Disproportionate Minority Contact</i> Identified Strategies</b>
On-going	Platte County will continue to provide bilingual services at all levels of the juvenile justice system.
Annually	The Platte Valley Diversion Program will continue to seek funding to provide the valuable resource of the bilingual diversion officer position and bilingual parenting education. Both of these areas have been funded through the Title II Grant which is a step down program providing funds for a five year period.
On-going	Platte County will need to continue to educate the community in the areas of cultural awareness and poverty training. A better understanding of the diverse community will bring about cooperation and positive acceptance.
On-going	The lack of bilingual mental health providers in the county requires Hispanic families to seek resources outside of the areas. This is an inconvenience and burden for these families. The county will need to continue to address this issue.

**Priority #4:** *Substance abuse among teenagers.*

**Strategies:** The East Central District Health Department has recently received a SPF SIG grant award to address the serious problem of underage drug use in a four county region including Platte County. This coalition has begun to identify specific areas that will be addressed in a three year period. The Platte Valley Diversion Administrator is a member of that coalition partnering to gather data, developing strategies and evaluating the outcome of the programs that will be going forward.

<b>Time Schedule</b>	<b>Priority #5: <i>Large number of youth entering the juvenile justice system for truancy offenses</i></b> <b>Identified Strategies</b>
Annually evaluate policies in place to determine effectiveness	District schools will need to develop strategies to try to decrease the actual charges going forward to the county attorney. This may be accomplished through school interventionists, home liaisons, a truancy officer or a staff member whose priority is to focus on the truancy issue.
Implement by December 2010	Platte County will need to develop a way to consistently and accurately collect data regarding truancy problems.
Annually grant writer investigates possible grant opportunities	School budgets will need to seek additional resources to fund this staff position.
On-going discussion until development of program	Develop levels of consequences that include family intervention. The possibility of establishing family mentors or parent mentors to assist with the accountability of the juvenile and the parent.
On-going development until effective program in place	Programming developed for all truancy juveniles and their parents that would provide a better understanding of the importance of education. This could include support groups and educational opportunities to improve parenting skills.
On-going	The last resort should be the juvenile justice system. When found to be necessary the parent must be held responsible with the county attorney moving forward with a citation of Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor.
Grant writer opportunity to seek funding through available grants by December 2011	Lack of transportation is a driving force identified for some of the current truancy concerns. Because of the differential shifts available at many of the factories in Platte County, parents are working at the time their children need to be transported to schools. Resources may need to be developed to provide transportation to school for these families.
On-going improved parental involvement at school meetings or community informational meetings	Hispanic families continue to take their children out of school so that the child can provide interpretation services for the family when necessary. Many times students miss multiple days of school providing this service for their Spanish speaking parents. Education must continue to move forward to allow the students the best opportunity to earn their credits.

<b>Time Schedule</b>	<b>Priority #6: <i>Gang involvement among the youth in Platte County.</i> Identified Strategies</b>
On-going until procedures are in place to accurately gather necessary information	Data must be collected to assess the current situation. The county will need to determine the extent of the gang problem. Law enforcement should be encouraged to take the lead role. By using a model program assessment tool, the community can identify major gang concerns and misconceptions.
Complete assessment by December 2009	The community must continue to become educated in this area to allow strategies to be identified and to allow the community to buy into the strategies.
On-going while level of concern is ranked high in assessment	Gang awareness education must be provided for all levels of the community.
Development of community task force by June 2010	Key stake holders will need to work together in order to address the issues in a joint effort to decrease youth involvement.
On-going development to bring faith based mentoring programs by December 2009	Increase mentoring among all populations.
Development of programming identified through assessment, implemented by December 2010	Develop programming specifically addressing those youth currently involved with gangs. Work opportunities, educational opportunities and volunteer opportunities should be included in the curriculum.
On-going process	Encourage the faith based providers to become more involved in all areas.

<b>Time Schedule</b>	<b>Priority #7: <i>Parental responsibility and accountability</i> Identified Strategies</b>
On-going educational process provided by schools and local agencies identified to address these concerns	Parents must begin to understand the importance of their involvement. Children can become more successful when all parties are working together. Parents cannot expect the schools or the juvenile justice system to change behavior. It must begin at home.
On-going	Develop strategies to hold parents more accountable at all levels. The child and parents are both responsible for the child's success.
On-going development through county attorney and juvenile court	Implementation of consequences for child and parent at each stage of accountability.
Development and availability of programming by December 2011	Parents will need to be armed with research based management skills to assist with the process of juvenile accountability.
On-going development	The county will research programming opportunities to assist parents. Incentives may be provided to encourage parental buy-in.

**Priority #8:** *Teenage pregnancies.*

**Strategies:** Youth for Christ continues to be the agency in Platte County taking the lead in developing programs and providing resources to address this concern. The agency currently provides numerous teen programming that includes prevention strategies and assistance for teenage mothers and fathers in the county. They have also developed a mentoring program for these youth to assist with the on-going development of the teen and the infant. The East Central District Health Department and Central Nebraska Community Services also provide valuable resources for teens in the prevention area and by providing head start day care services so that the teen moms can remain in school. Schools may consider trying to assist the young mothers by developing an AID (Academic Improvement Plan).